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RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
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WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD
LONDON FOR ERELI
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OIIP KMDR TC
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: EXECUTION OF SADDAM/NEW STRATEGIES IN
IRAQ/POLITICAL IMPOTENCE OF GULF SYSTEM

¶1. Summary: "Al-Khaleej" warns that Bush's new strategy for Iraq will likely only make the situation worse. A female UAE columnist in "Al-Bayan" discussed the reasons of Saddam's execution ignited fires of sectarianism between Sunnis and Shiites and laid the responsibility on the current Iraqi government. "Al-Khaleej" voiced its concern over the impotence of the regional Gulf system at a time when the situation is critical and full of clashes and blind vendettas. End Summary.

¶2. Under the headline "A victory that led to defeat", Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) editorialized on 1/8:

"It is obvious that President Bush will, during the announcement of his new strategy on Iraq, ignore the content of the Baker-Hamilton Report and the steps required to extricate the United States from the Iraqi quagmire. He will also ignore the calls and cries of the Democrats for the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq and against sending more troops... President Bush will not accept defeat. He is determined to win, believing that his new military and political team will turn things upside down and bring what other military leaders, ambassadors and intelligence officers were not able to achieve. However, the result will be far worse than even now and he may be the second American president to bring defeat to his country, after the defeat of Vietnam... This is what many politicians and intellectuals in the United States warn of."

¶3. A female UAE national, Muna Al-Bahar, wrote a 01/08 op-ed in Dubai-based Arabic daily "Al-Bayan," (circulation 85,000):

"...Saddam Hussein is a criminal who killed thousands of innocent Iraqis from all sects creating opposition groups from Shiites and Sunnis alike. The current government seems to be doing the same thing through its administration of political and social issues. The sectarian massacres we hear of everyday or the details of Saddam's trial shows that this government is racist and sectarian. It also proves the impotence of its leadership of Iraq and its inability to bring Iraq to a better situation, address the devastating era of Saddam and destroy the brutal occupation... The trial proved one point: it was a process of revenge rather than justice. Instead of his trial and execution leading to reconciliation and national harmony, this act of revenge gave Saddam the chance to become a hero of the Sunni Arab resistance. It became yet another source of frenzied sectarian violence, not only in Iraq, but wherever there are both Sunnis and Shiites living together."

¶4. Under the headline "Gulf of wars", Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) editorialized on 1/7:

"Is the Arab Gulf doomed to a life of war decade after decade and to live in permanent fear, in response to the whims of regional and international empires...? Hasn't the Arab regional system in the Gulf, whether as countries or peoples, learned any lessons from the Iran-Iraq war, the occupation of Kuwait and the war of liberation, the siege of Iraq and the war of its occupation? Haven't we learned from what is happening in Iraq and from our previous comments saying that invading Iraq would be catastrophic at all levels? However, instead of the occupation forces realizing this fact, they return to square one by increasing the volume of their military forces in Iraq and push their fleets and missiles to the waters of the Gulf. This happens while Israeli influence begins directing the administration towards confrontation and infiltration in the Gulf to turn the situation into a destructive and explosive one. Of course all this happens while the Iranian speech becomes more conceited and continues to be unreasonable and inflammatory... What is happening today is a repetition of what has happened yesterday and does not provide any solutions... It is regrettable and worrying too is that in times of concern and where the situation is critical and full of clashes and blind vendettas the regional Gulf system remains a dormant position. What is happening now in the Gulf basin is, in short, the production of violent clashes, mined with arrogance and sectarian blindness, and doped in oil and dreams of empire. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), stands in front of the most difficult tests. The question is: Will it move collectively, in an active way, in order to save the region from a new catastrophe?"

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